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ASIA

Karakoram and Western Himalaya, 1909. An Account of the Expedition of H. R. H. Prince Luigi Amedeo of Savoy, Duke of the Abruzzi. By Filippo de Filippi. With a Preface by the Duke of the Abruzzi. xvii and 469 pp. Ills., appendices. Maps and plates in separate case. Constable & Co., Ltd., London, 1912.

In 1909 the Duke of the Abruzzi made an expedition to the Karakoram and the Western Himalayas, primarily for the purpose of establishing a new record in mountain-climbing. He also desired to ascertain how high it is physically possible for human beings to ascend, and whether there is a physiological limit above which men cannot climb. At the end of two months of persevering effort amid snow and ice he at least surpassed all previous records by 700 feet and reached a height of 24,600 feet on Bride Peak. This peak lies some twenty miles south of the famous K², 28,250 feet high, which was the first objective of the expedition. The region of K² was selected because the political conditions of Nepal prevent an attempt in that direction upon Everest, while Kichenjunga, the third of the world's chief mountains, has already been vainly attempted and is less favorable than K² in other respects. If high climbs can be made in any part of the world it should be in the Karakoram region, for there the number of peaks rising over 23,000 feet is probably larger than anywhere else in the world.

On his mountaineering expeditions the Duke of the Abruzzi manages all the details in person, and is at the fore-front whenever a mountain is attacked. He makes little attempt, however, to work up results, leaving that to the group of Italian friends whom he takes with him. One of these, Signor de Filippi, a physician, has written the sumptuously bound book under review, while another, Signor Sella, has illustrated it with some of the finest photographs and panoramic views ever taken. The book as a whole is a straight-forward, unvarnished, very painstaking account of the details of the trip day by day. Nearly half of it is devoted to the route from Kashmir to the Indus River and thence to the Baltoro Glacier, where the real mountaineering began. This route has been often followed and is well known to students of the Himalayas. It is not to be expected that an author who is not a field scientist should be able to record much that is new. De Filippi is probably wise in merely describing what he saw and rarely attempting to explain it, except by citing the opinions of others. One of the few cases where he expresses his own views is in regard to the origin of the huge alluvial terraces of the Indus and its tributaries, which are thought by some to be due to climatic variations and by others to telluric movements. De Filippi inclines to the climatic hypothesis.

When the last villages were reached several hundred Balti coolies were engaged to carry the provisions and equipment up into the glaciers. It is pleasant to hear the good opinion which the Italian explorers formed of the Baltis. Sometimes the coolies were afraid, as any man might be where his life is continually in danger. Nevertheless, they stuck to their work and proved reliable through the whole journey. Their cheerfulness under difficulties is notable. Some of them went with the Duke to an altitude of 20,000 feet, although the main work fell upon a party of Swiss guides. The origin of the Baltis is another of the questions upon which de Filippi expresses an opinion. He believes them to be of Aryan stock, and not Mongolian, as is often stated.

As speedily as possible the expedition proceeded up the great Baltoro Glacier to the foot of K², sometimes known as Mount Godwin Austin. Repeated attempts were made to ascend the mountain from all sides except the north, where it was already known to be inaccessible. In every case, however, vast walls of solid ice or other impassable obstructions brought the climbers to a halt at altitudes of about 22,000 feet. Day after day the storms were so severe as to prevent all work, and the longest period of clear weather was only three days. This did not come until after K² had been abandoned and the party was on its way to make an attempt upon Bride Peak, 25,110 feet high. Here the difficulties proved less. A camp was pitched at the extraordinary altitude of 22,483 feet and a maximum elevation of 24,600 feet was reached.

During all their journeyings back and forth the Italians made careful obser-

vations of the movements of the ice, its method of fracture, the distribution and composition of moraines, and the state of the atmosphere. All of these, together with innumerable descriptions of mountain scenery, are set forth in detail. The phases of the volume which hold the attention, however, are the wonderful pictures, and the self-control with which the Italians stuck to their work while in the field and refrain from boasting of their success now that they have returned.

The achievement of this expedition brings renewed evidence to show that the attainment of high altitudes, while in part a matter of abundant means, adequate equipment and trained mountaineers, is still more a question of steady persistence and wise planning. If K² or Everest were among the Alps, as Filippi well says, it is probable that they would be climbed within a few years; but their remoteness, the necessity of a hard journey of two or three months to reach even their base, and the frequent storms of summer or the low temperature of winter, are almost insuperable obstacles. Hence, we cannot say with certainty that they ever will be climbed. There does not seem, however, to be any physiological reason why this should be so. "The Duke's expedition," to quote de Filippi, "offers the clearest proof that men can live for extended periods of time, in possession of healthy functional activity of all their organs, at an atmospheric pressure little more than half of normal. Twelve Europeans and fifteen coolies lived for about two months at above 17,000 feet of altitude, working regularly and not showing a single case of illness, even of the most fleeting character, attributable to mountain sickness."

ELLSWORTH HUNTINGTON.

Patriarchal Palestine. Canaan and the Canaanites before the Israelitish Conquest. By the Rev. A. H. Sayce. 254 pp. Map, index. Soc. for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1912. 4s. 8 x 5.

This is a revised edition of a work printed in 1895, when Palestine excavation was in its beginnings. Little was then known of the history of the country prior to the invasion of the Israelitish people. Since that time the decipherment of monuments in Babylonia, Assyria, Egypt and Palestine has made clear much of this ancient history. The author is perhaps too eager to assert the unqualified historical character and Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and dismisses with sweeping denial the conclusions of higher criticism, as set aside by archaeological discoveries. At the same time he sets up the traditional belief of the Jewish and Christian church concerning these matters as authority to which unquestioning heed must be given.

A few of the leading facts of the physical geography are reviewed in the opening chapter on the land. An account of the native tribes is then given, followed by an extended chapter on the Babylonians in Canaan. The story of the Patriarchs is told, adding little, however, to the narrative of Genesis, except in emphasis on one point, *viz.*: that Abraham found the country of his adoption full of the ideas and people of Babylonia. The relations of Palestine to Egypt are recounted and there is reference to the general geographical situation of the land, and its significance, but without special enlargement of our outlook on this theme. The closing account of Canaanitish culture and religion and of the results of recent excavations come nearer than other parts of the volume to meeting the anticipations of interest aroused by the title.

A. P. BRIGHAM.

The Chinese. By John Stuart Thomson. 441 pp. Ills., index. Bobbs-Merrill Co., Indianapolis, 1912. 9 x 6.

In this volume we have the pretentious record of what seem to be the gatherings of one who was engaged upon the clerical side of commercial operations in the treaty ports. In places it reads with as little connection as if it were the transcription of notes jotted down on library cards and assorted under any one of a dozen general headings. It is superficial: there is no pretense to look under the surface, embroidered or squalid, of Chinese life to obtain a comprehension of the nature of this oldest of the civilized societies. The value of these notes must be determined by our estimate of the capability of the observer, for the witness must always be an integral part of his testimony. We note a few points which are germane to the examination of the witness. On his page 15 he mentions